

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 1896.

MAKING IT REALISTIC

NETHERSOLE'S DEFENCE OF HER STYLE IN 'CARMEN'

She Declares that when She is Playing the Part of a Degraded Woman She Should Be True to Life—Other Opinions on the Matter.

NEW YORK, Jan. 22.—"Hasn't that subject been pretty thoroughly threshed?" smiled Olga Nethersole, as I asked her to give me her views on her own performance of "Carmen," at the Savoy Hotel. "I have been interested so often on this subject since I produced 'Carmen' at the Empire three weeks ago, that really I don't know exactly what to say, unless I repeat what I have said already. I see no reason why such a hullabaloo should have been raised about 'Carmen' by the very people who have so highly praised my Camille. Now look here," continued Miss Nethersole, crossing her arms in a decided sort of way, and smiling at me across the teacups. "Now that I have begun to talk on this subject, I find that I have a great deal to say, after all. Be careful, or I shall unburden myself, and then I shall keep you busy listening until it is time to go to the theatre."

"For years and years it had been my dream to play 'Carmen.' I have been on the stage now a little less than seven years. I made a debut as a stage adventuress, and in two years time I had become so thoroughly identified with wicked parts that nothing short of a starring tour in Australia could have induced me to give up the error of my way. It was during that Australian tour when I began to play 'Camille' that I made up my mind that one of these fine days I would play 'Carmen,' as it had never been played before. I had never seen Mme. Calve in the role, but all the operatic 'Carmens' I had seen impressed me as being so pincushiony, if you catch my idea. I mean that it seemed to me that they were unreal, impassive. None of them gave you any definite idea of the intensity of this woman. Prosper Merrine's Carmen is not immoral. She is worse; she is immoral. And you know that does not mean at all the same thing. She was essentially an animal; an animal with human moments; hardhearted, if you like, but not absolutely heartless in a literal sense, for there are two or three scenes in the story where you will remember Carmen shows some feelings. Well, as I was telling you this character absorbed me. Night after night I used to lie awake trying to evolve a play out of Merrine's story. But I'm afraid I shall never be a playwright," laughed Miss Nethersole. "Even my enemies have to admit that I am a good stage manager, but I know my limitations as well as any one, and therefore I shall never try to write a play. Finally, however, I met Henry Hamilton. We had many long talks about 'Carmen,' and at last one day he set to work on the play. After it was finished I secured my costumes, and then, added the actress, with a sigh, 'both the gowns and the play lay fallen for a long, long time. When Mr. Dily engaged me for my first American tour it was understood that 'Carmen' should be produced that season. However, now I am very glad it wasn't. I wanted to wait until it could be produced in a proper manner, and I have had my wish, you see. My managers, the Messrs. Frohman, spared no expense to make it a success."

"And now I will tell you the oddest thing of all about this play. The night of its production I was wrought up to such a high pitch that I had no idea how the play had affected the audience. Of course, I knew by the many curtain calls which I received that the play was a success, but it was not until I took up the newspapers the next morning that I learned how I had 'shocked' my audience. After the curtain went down two women came behind the scenes to congratulate me. They told me that they considered it the finest thing I had ever done. These women, mind you, were not regular theatregoers, and I knew that they honestly meant what they said. But the next day after I read of the erotic exhibition I was declared to have made of myself I thought: This is curious, why were not my two friends shocked? Later in the day, when I saw them again, I asked them pointblank why they had not told me that I had shocked them the night before. Both of them declared that they had not seen anything to be shocked at. And this is a curious feature of this whole discussion. I have had nearly a hundred letters from women about my performance of this part, and not one—not a single one—of my correspondents have expressed themselves as being shocked by my performance. It is the men, and the men only, who have declared it to be erotic."

"Admitting that their accusation is a just one—and I am only doing so for the sake of argument—I can only say I am playing Carmen, not Olga Nethersole, and I am trying to give as lifelike an impersonation as I can. "But don't let us talk about Carmen any

more," laughed Miss Nethersole, her whole face lighting up with one of her wonderful smiles. "I have to be Carmen tonight for three hours, you know. Let us talk about anything else you like—books, the possibility of war—anything but that one exhausting subject."

"Shall you be sorry to start on the road again?" "Yes and no. I dread the long journeys and my quarters here in the Savoy are so homelike that I shall be loath to leave them again. But for the rest of my tour I shall only appear in cities where I have been before, and therefore I am looking forward to seeing many old friends. I say 'old friends' purposely, because though we have not known each other long, wherever I have acted in America I have been welcomed so heartily that I feel as though I have been playing to American audiences for years and years. Sometimes it seems as if I had never played anywhere else. I should liked dearly to have played 'Romeo and Juliet' before leaving New York, but it would have been silly to have taken off 'Carmen' when it was at the height of its success."

"There's one thing about the New York public which I cannot quite understand. A great many persons who brought their friends to see me in 'Camille' would not come to see me in 'Denise.' Now, why? Surely between the two 'Denises' is the more moral play. 'Camille' is not a favorite play with me; the whole atmosphere of it is hectic, artificial. But I cannot imagine any one seeing 'Denise' without feeling the better for it. In my opinion Dumas never wrote anything more noble and more pathetic. I love to play 'Denise.' "For one reason I am sorry that we are not playing 'The Transgressor' any more. One of the best actors in my company has no chance to act any more. Come here, Barry!" exclaimed Miss Nethersole, as a big collie rose from his earth rug. "In 'The Transgressor' Barry played quite an important role. Barry will be glad to get on the road again, won't you, Barry? New York doesn't agree with him a little bit. As for myself, it seems as if I were only beginning to know New York. You see, all last season and during the first three weeks of my season here this year, I was so busy rehearsing that I had no time whatever to devote to society. For the last three weeks, however, I have had a breathing spell, and really I don't think I have ever enjoyed myself so much in my life."

It has been claimed by many of the critics that Miss Nethersole's performance of "Carmen" is realism, but not art. Here are three opinions from three distinguished persons on the subject. Behind the scenes at Olympia last night I asked Yvette Guilbert what she thought of Miss Nethersole's performance. "Well," said Yvette, "perhaps I am prejudiced. You see, I had seen Mme. Calve play 'Carmen' just a few nights before. She is a great artist—Nethersole or Calve?" "Oh, Calve," laughed Mile. Guilbert, with a nod of her head. "Miss Nethersole is a fine actress, untutored she has great moments but small quarters of an hour. She interested me, though I must admit that, and she shocked me. That is still more interesting is it not? I do not think those kisses of hers would be allowed in Paris, but then," added Yvette with a twinkle in her eye, "we Parisians are notoriously straight-laced."

Later in the evening I saw Sarah Bernhardt. "I have not seen Miss Nethersole's performance," she said; "but from all I have heard of it I should think it must be very bad art. It is always such bad form to kiss on the stage. I never really do it myself. There is so much more in a suggestion than in a cold fact. I hope I shall see this young woman before I leave America, though. She certainly must have talent; art without its corsets on, I should imagine from all accounts. There must be something in her though to arouse all this talk, don't you think. I shall have to see for myself."

Kyrle Bellow was the other person whom I asked for an opinion. I ran across him on the street in Philadelphia the other day, and asked him if he had seen the Nethersole's Carmen.

"I am sorry to say I have not," he replied. "However, it must be an extraordinary performance. I don't believe in such excess of realism myself. One can make so much greater an impression on an audience by mere suggestion. I suppose you wouldn't believe me if I were to tell you that in all the nineteen years of my experience as a stage lover, I have never actually kissed an actress."

LESLIE WHITACRE: An "English Author" complains to the London Telegraph that publishers will not accept stories at present unless they contain "Scotch." The average duration of human life in European countries is greatest in Sweden and Norway, and the lowest in Italy and Austria.

FANCY WORK BASKETS.

THE LATEST IDEA IN OUTFITS FOR ENGAGED GIRLS.

Baskets Which are Ornamental and may be Useful to Some Owners—They are Made to Harmonize With the Furnishings of the Boudoir and are Very Stylish.

Whether a woman sews for a living or whether she never so much as mends a rip in a glove, she is pretty sure to own a work basket. Women have a weakness for baskets.

"They are so handy," say the burden-bearing women of the world, and "They are so dainty and useful," echo those whose only work is that involved in having a good time.

Before a girl reaches her teens she is bound to receive a work basket either on a birthday or Christmas. It she be a child of the poor her basket is a large, strong affair, lined with cretonne or bright-colored chintz and fitted out with strong cotton thread, darning cotton and needles, a pair of steel cutting scissors, and other implements intended for use rather than adornment. Not so with my Lady Luxury's basket. It is a dainty white and gold affair, or olive and blue, to match the hangings in her boudoir, and as for its furnishings, they are all of sterling silver or silver gilded and cost a sum that it would be a fortune to the owner of the simpler work basket.

A veiled and a very young woman met at the novelty counter of a silversmith's recently; one will soon celebrate her golden wedding and the other expects to be married soon.

"Oh, Mrs. Oldtime," exclaimed the young girl, "you've caught me, so I suppose I may just as well own up. I'm getting my work basket ready, and you know what that means."

"Indeed, I don't my dear," answered the elder woman, "unless it means that you are a sensible girl and have made up your mind to learn to make your own clothes, as I did long before I was your age."

"No, indeed," was the astonished reply. "Haven't you heard? Why, I'm going to be married at Easter, and you know it is quite the fashion nowadays for a girl to get up a work basket before entering married life. Her girl friends, as soon as the engagement is announced, give her each some article for her work basket, so that by the time the wedding comes off the bride generally has a fully equipped basket if she is fortunate enough to have many friends. Several married women have confided to me that nothing makes a newly married man so angry as to ask his dear little wifely to sew on a button or to tack his suspenders, and to have her reply that she has no needle and no thread sufficiently strong."

"And it's enough to make him swear," put in the older woman, vigorously. "The very idea of a woman entering the married state without plenty of needles with big eyes and coarse thread, to say nothing of a stout pair of shears. In my day such things were as much a part of the trousseau as were the white satin gown and slippers, and the wax orange blossoms. But young women aren't brought up nowadays as they were then."

"Wait till you've heard about my basket before you condemn us," said the engaged girl with a merry laugh. "I have most of the things to go in it, in fact all except the sharp things, and I've come in here to buy those myself, as it is dreadful luck to accept anything that cuts, sticks, or pricks from a friend. You know it would certainly break up a lifelong friendship between the giver and receiver. Well, first let me tell you about the basket itself. I had a hard time getting it, as there are so many beauties, ranging in price from fifteen cents up to \$8 to select from. Baskets are cheaper now than ever before, and the work baskets have been made especially pretty to the demand. Those made of rush in the natural ochre shade with the bamboo finishings stained in cherry are perhaps the strongest and are very popular, but are not nearly so dainty as the enamelled rush baskets. They come in square, diamond, heart, and octagon shapes, and the colors are pale blue, pale pink, white and gold, the loveliest shades of green, and pale yellow. Some of them are open, while others have pockets and compartments and a top. Two dollars will buy a beauty, and I had almost decided on a white and gold one when the willow baskets on stands caught my eye. Some held three baskets, and they were white with some dainty color braided in. My attention was distracted from these by the grass baskets in dainty green shades, with straw braiding, like the fancy straw hats, woven in various dainty shades. The combinations of green and lilac, olive and pale blue, and red and yellow were especially effective in the grass baskets, and just as I'd positively made up my mind to take one of these the clerk said to me:

"Is this your engagement basket that you are getting?"

"Yes," I answered in astonishment, and at first was inclined to resent the question as an impertinence, but when she showed me

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The prettiest baskets I ever saw, made of celluloid and bamboo, I decided that she was a far-seeing woman. These baskets are not only durable, but also exceedingly artistic. The bamboo was enamelled white, and the celluloid in all colors. Some were plain flat baskets, some stood on legs, and others were on stands. One very pretty basket on a stand was boat-shaped, but I finally took three hearts, one above the other, on a stand. The bamboo is white and gold, and the celluloid olive green, and I shall line it with pale blue satin, carrying out the same color scheme in my room."

The girl stopped to catch her breath, and her companion said with a sly smile: "As long as I've lived I never heard so much about work baskets, and I'm anxious to hear what you are going to put in yours."

"Loads of things," resumed the girl. "I first thought that I would use the gilded silver, but decided in favor of the bright, and the pattern that I've chosen is the chrysanthemum. I have three pairs of scissors, one for buttonholes, one for embroidery, and one for general cutting. All have steel points and silver handles. The two small pairs cost \$2.25 each, and the large ones, which have a silver sheath, \$5. Of course I bought these myself, but the girls have given me three needle cases. One has five numbered cells to hold different sized needles. There is an indicator on the top which is turned to the number desired, and a little shake brings the needle out. It is put back in the same way. The price of such a case is \$3, but a case that I like better is a small round silver box combining a thread case, holding three kinds, a needle case, and a thimble holder in the most compact way. It is also useful in travelling. I have a number of thread boxes. One holds one spool of buttonhole twist, and is a cute trifle costing only \$1.25. Another is called a spool carriage, and holds six spools of cotton or silk thread. It looks like a long, narrow silver box without a top, and it is impossible for the thread to get tangled in it; and then one is not aggravated by losing the ends. Another box with two spools with three compartments each, is intended to hold six colors of embroidery silk and a thimble. It is the shape of a hair pin box, and the chrysanthemum show especially well on the long flat top. I do not keep my thimble in this box, for, you see, several of my cases have compartments for a thimble, and so I do not use any, but have a separate thimble box, and that saves time in looking around for it. And speaking of thimbles reminds me. You know a thimble often rubs the finger, but I don't intend that mine shall. So I have a shield grooved so that the thread slips through it readily, to wear on my forefinger. It is a most useful device, and is really a necessity for a beginner, saving her many painful pricks. Of course, pins are almost as much of a necessity in sewing as needles, for what woman does not pin her work to her lap, especially if she happens to be doing a piece of hemming? My pincushion is one of my prettiest pieces, and the only one that hasn't the chrysanthemum design. It is small and round, having a Columbian half collar on the bottom. The top is olive green velvet, and my emery, mounted on two silver shells, is the same color. Emeries come made up in acorn, gooseberries, blackberries, tomatoes, and strawberries, too, but they are not so new as the shell design. Wax for the thread is made up in the same designs, with silver caps, varying in price from 75 cents upward."

"The things used in embroidery work interest me more than anything else, because I do enjoy fancy work. Instead of the wooden embroidery ring that you used to make yourself I have one of solid silver, and it cost \$6, but, of course, the wooden frame answered every purpose. I suppose, though, it was an unsightly thing. Then there are the silk winders I have two double ones and four single, all alike; two cupid

with wings from design, and the silk is easily transferred to them from the skeins I also have several silver boxes with compartments for silk embroidery. The things that ought to interest me most are those used in darning but they don't, though they are the prettiest of all. A silver ball holds a ball of darning cotton, the end of which is pulled through a hole just as twine is taken from a twine ball holder. This piece cost \$15.25, and is one of the handsomest and most useful and keeps the cotton handy to get at. Then come my two darners. Both have wooden tops which unscrew from the handles. The latter are hollow, so that the darning needles can be kept in them. One has a pearl-and-silver handle, while the other is all silver, and they cost \$2.75 each. The glove darners are of similar pattern, except the tops are small enough to get into the finger of a glove, and with them comes every imaginable shade of silk and cotton thread.

"I have three measurers, the first a tape, sixty inches in length, in a silver case, the second a solid silver folding foot rule, and last, and most useful of all, a stem measurer. The girl who gave me this said she was tempted to break over and buy me one of gilded silver, studded with stones, but I'm glad to say she stuck to the design that I settled upon. The plain ones cost \$2.25, and the folding foot rules \$3.

"Today I'm going to buy several sharp things, and then I'll have everything. I want—a ripper," and suiting the action to the word she had a clerk put out several before her.

"Why, those look like silver pencils to me," ventured the older woman. "So they do," said the girl; "but unscrew this end and out comes a sharp blade, which rips the tightest stitching in no time; unscrew the other and you have a stiletto for piercing eyelet holes.

"I'll take that," she said, turning to the clerk. "Now give me a silver crochet needle, one of those at 75 cents, a tape needle and a bodkin at 60 cents each, and, oh, yes, don't forget to put in a silver court plaster case, for I shall be certain to prick my fingers constantly, as I don't know how to sew up a straight seam."

Do you mean to say that you've bought all of this truck and don't know how to hem a pocket handkerchief?" asked the older woman in a disgusted tone. "Well, that beats me. Why, how much did your outlay cost?"

"Oh, not more than \$50," answered the girl, "and of course I don't ever expect to use them much, but it's really essential to have such things, for I've heard my brother say a dozen times that men never admired a woman so much as when she sat by a daintily appointed work basket, bending over in a graceful attitude, as she chased a needle and thread through some flimsy stuff; and I guess he knows."

"Well, the young men of these days have queer ideas of beauty," contended the older woman. "A man in my days would have said that that was tomfoolishness, and he would have thought it a much prettier sight to see a girl darning the heel of a pair of silk or woolen stockings with her knitting needles, or to watch her down on the floor cutting herself out a gown with a strong pair of shears, such as we used to shear the sheep. But times do change, and somehow I don't change with them, dear, so go on and be happy with your silk-lined basket and its dozens of silver fol-de-rols, and don't mind me, but it does seem a terrible extravagance to spend so much, especially when you couldn't mend a rent in your intended husband's trousers."

—N. Y. Sun.

Told of Canning. Some entertaining anecdotes are related in Temple Bar of Canning, the celebrated English statesman, who has again been in the public eye because of his connection with the Monroe doctrine. For example, though he knew the French language well, he persisted in pronouncing the words as if they were English; and his aversion to the letter "f" led him to spell "fat" "phat," etc. He was a very gorgeous figure in his dress of blue nankeen tights and waistcoat and tailcoat, with a broad plait down his cambric shirt and a fob-chain dangling from his watch pocket.

HE GAVE IT A LESSON.

How a Philosopher Set to Work to Cure a Ram of Its Bad Habits.

Jim McCue, rancher, politician, philosopher, and horse doctor, walked on the ferry-boat with a crutch the other day. He also had one arm in a sling and his head bandaged.

"What's the matter, Jim?" inquired two or three acquaintances.

"I'll bet any man in the crowd \$20 he can butt harder and longer than any ram or billy-goat in the state," responded Jim, somewhat irrelevantly, "but I guess I've broke him of it."

"You look as if you had been broken some yourself," suggested one.

"Well, to tell the truth, I did get jammed around a little. I've been breaking a ram of the butting habit. This ram was raised a pet, and that's what makes him so easy. He knows who to tackle, too. He won't touch a man, because he knows he'd get a fence rail frazzled over his head, but a woman he will butt clear over into the next pasture."

"The other morning this ram jolted a lady friend of mine clear across the field and through a picket fence, and I thought it was about time to cure him of the habit. I put on an old calico dress, tied on an old sun-bonnet, and, concealing a sledgehammer under my apron, sauntered down through the field. The minute the ram saw me he dropped all the business he had on hand and came over to have some fun with me. He squared off, shook his head, and made a run for me. When I stepped to one side to get a good swing at him with a sledge-hammer, the blamed old dress tripped me and I fell down. I started to get up, but the ram was behind me and I turned two somersaults before I hit the ground again. I didn't stand any chance at all. He just kept lifting me till he got me over again the fence, and then he lit into me. He jammed me down against the fence, then backed off and hit me another crack, and then another and another till I thought he'd broken every rib in my body. Finally he jimmied me clear through the bottom rail and I managed to crawl to the house."

"But I got even this morning. I had the hired man to take a green oak log, dress it up in woman's clothes, and set it swinging from a limb. That buck lost a horn the first time he hit it, and it wasn't long till the second went the same way. When I left it he was meeting it halfway every time it swung back at him, and I wouldn't wonder if he ain't worn down pretty close to the tail by this time."—San Francisco Post.

Professional Comparison.

Young Doctor (on his honeymoon) Just observe, witty dear, the curious tints of the sky. That cloud poised on the mountain crest over yonder is exactly the color of a diseased liver.

An Awful Possibility.

A Possibility More Awful Still.—Friend—It must be awful to have the newspapers keep saying such things about you. Political Candidate—Yes, but supposing they didn't say anything at all!

You Know Something

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